

we hoped that the program would allow us to create an archive which more fully represented the community in which we live, and provide a more diverse history/record of our region and the people we serve. This project inspired archives staff to examine the many silences in our archives, and make

In the years following the kickoff of the Community Webs Project, Forbes library co-hosted multiple series of exhibits, films, workshops, walking tours, and community reads on themes of mass incarceration, including:

large and small, and solidified our view that surfacing stories of people who had been underrepresented in the archives should be a core value in our work as an institution.

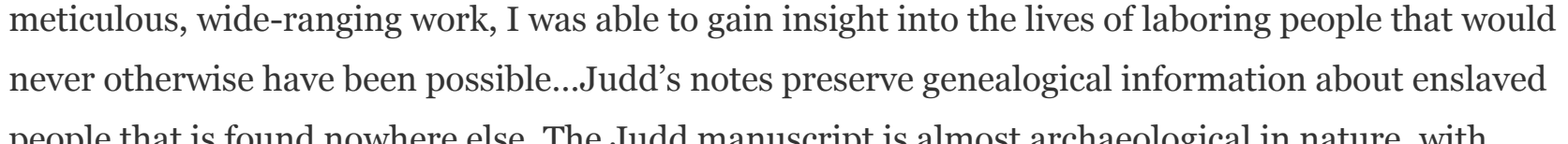
This work inspired Forbes Library, Historic Northampton, UMass Amherst, and the Pioneer Valley History Network to take lead roles in the 2021 [Documenting Early Black Lives in the Connecticut River Valley](#) project, which seeks to gather the fragmentary information about Black lives from the wide range of sources and archives in Western Massachusetts so that a whole might be perceived that is larger than the sum of those parts. The project, to date, has surfaced over 3500 records or references to people of color, enslaved and free, in Western Massachusetts from the 17th through 19th

We know too little about Black lives in rural and small-town New England, and the places Black residents were able to carve out for themselves in these communities. With this project, we hoped to understand the challenges and opportunities that Black residents in these communities have faced.

event for the project, UM Amherst professor Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina mentioned challenging the assumptions of others (sometimes called Gatekeepers) who “might be quick to discourage a researcher interested in Black History, reporting that they don’t have much...or not thinking about ways that records of white families might be useful to this research.” Gerzina remarked that researchers, curators, and librarians should “start from the perspective of presence.”

As the Documenting Black Lives project was undertaken with grant funding, and the time thus limited, we needed to develop an approach that would be productive right away. We identified several collections in the library’s Hampshire Room for Local History that we expected could be productive

We attended the Funeral of Hall's little boy, at 3 P.M., at the house of Paul Strong. Many of the community and others in the neighborhood attended. A hymn was sung; some remarks were made by a colored woman, appropriate and



the first piano in town, who laid the first carpet, the sound of th

found in any other kind of more formal or systematic archival material. These pages, filled from edge to edge with his notes, cross references, sketches, and other materials, simply team with the kinds of details that historians crave, but cannot hope to find—except in Northampton.”

If we start from an assumption of presence (of underrepresented people both in the community and in the archives), the primary obstacles to discovering and surfacing information in collections like ours, often revolve around issues of access, and methodologies for search and discovery. We had long dreamed of digitizing all 60+ bound volumes of the collection to make them available to a wider group of researchers and the public at large. When the Community Webs program began to explore funding for a digitization program dedicated to expanding the amount and diversity of locally-focused community archives available online to users, the Judd Manuscript Collection seemed a good fit.

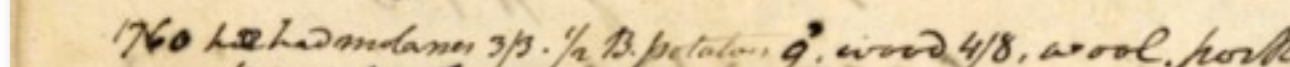
Now that the volumes have been [digitized](#), our mission is to spread the word about their value and

Amos Negro
children
Amos & his children

Margaret "	Aug 20	1702
Margaret "	Aug 14	1707
Stephena "	May 13.	1707
Margaret "	Feb 8	1761

Budd entry for the Hull Family, Northampton Genealogies Volume 4, p. 380.

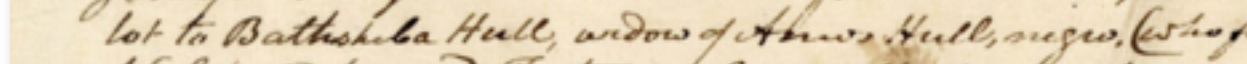
Budd devoted entire volumes to genealogies of local families, but the 500+ page volume on



His son Ebenezer died in 1761. His widow Bathsheba Hull
paid his & her account 1761. She was wid at 41 days.
Jan. 4, 1759

Goods purchased by Amos Hull between 1754-1759, as listed in Budd's transcription of Ebenezer

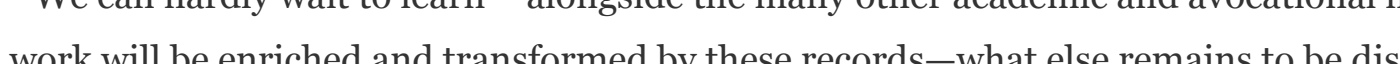
This entry transcribed from a local merchant's account book shows items purchased by Amos Hull, the services he would perform in exchange for goods received, and the rate at which he was paid. It notes that in 1761, the same year their daughter Margaret was born, Amos Hull died. Afterward, his widow Bathsheba paid for his and her accounts by washing. Bathsheba surely would have a difficult time supporting multiple children without her husband, and documents subsequently found elsewhere in our archives and in other institutions prove this to be the case.



of the land within 30 years, & was designed by John M. Clarke and Sheffield.
Judd entry describing the town seizing Bathsheba Hull's land, Northampton Vol. 2, p. 300.

Bathsheba and her family come up again in several entries in Judd, including multiple mentions of the town seizing her land and displacing her from it in 1765. This cruel act forces Bathsheba and her

achusetts. It is in Stockbridge where Agrippa Hull would enlist in May of 1777, and served for the remainder of the Revolutionary War in the Continental Army, including witnessing the surrender of British General John Burgoyne at Saratoga, New York, enduring the winter of 1777-78 at Valley Forge and was part of the battle at Monmouth Courthouse, New Jersey in June 1778. He then served as a personal assistant for the famed Polish general, revolutionary and engineer Tadeusz Kosciuszko and became a close friend of the General, during their years of War Service together. Agrippa's story and friendship with Kosciuszko, along with Kosciuszko's friendship with Thomas Jefferson is examined in Gary Nash and Graham Hodge's 2012 book "*Friends of Liberty: Thomas Jefferson, Tadeusz Kosciuszko, and Agrippa Hull*".



tions, these materials will certainly spark, inform, and enrich generations of new research, from student papers to dissertations to academic monographs. It is almost impossible to predict all the ways the volumes might reshape historiography, as well as conventional historical wisdom, because the contents at present are comparatively difficult to ferret out. But to be sure, these volumes have the potential to reshape the field of American historical thought in a dramatic and lasting way.

[Click here to browse the Sylvester Judd Manuscript Collection](#) on archive.org.

The Internet Archive and Community Webs are thankful for the support from the [National Historical](#)

ry Collections, which will digitize and provide access to a diverse range of local history archives that represent the experiences of immigrant, indigenous, and African American communities throughout the United States.



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